

July 30, 1998

The Success of Welfare Reform

Welfare Reform Continues to Promote Work and Independence

"The state's [South Carolina] department of social services is no longer an entitlement agency. Now it's an employment office. We are training welfare clients for work, teaching them how to fill out a job application, and working with them on getting along with co-workers and the boss. We are providing temporary assistance with child care and transportation. And above all, we expect that everyone who walks through has the capacity to achieve."

(South Carolina Governor, David M. Beasley)

It required two years of legislative heavy lifting to get welfare reform enacted in the 104th Congress. Democrats in the Senate fought to preserve the old welfare system and President Clinton vetoed Republican welfare reform twice.

Given the choice between voting for real welfare reform or voting simply to pile billions of more dollars on top of a failed, 62-year old system that excelled only at encouraging lifelong dependency, Democrats in the Senate chose the latter.

In fact, on the Senate's very first welfare reform vote in 1995, 98 percent (all but one) of Democrats in the Senate voted in favor of preserving the lifelong federal entitlement to welfare. Republican support for welfare reform on that same vote was 100 percent — and, as the results show, Republicans got it right. (See rollcall vote No. 400, Daschle substitute, September 7, 1995)

States Are Producing Results

Data compiled by the Department of Health and Human Services demonstrate the success of welfare reform. In May of 1998, HHS released figures that show the dramatic decline in welfare caseloads that has occurred since 1993 and from 1996 when the legislation was enacted:

- From January 1993 to March 1998, the number of welfare recipients declined by 5.2 million (or 37 percent), from 14.1 million individuals in 1993 to 8.9 million in 1998.
- Since welfare reform was enacted in August of 1996, the number of recipients has declined by 3.3 million (27 percent) individuals while the number of families on welfare has declined by 1.2 million (also 27 percent) since welfare reform was enacted.

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Decline in Total Number of Welfare Recipients by State

States	Jan. 93	Jan. 94	Jan. 95	Jan. 96	March 98	Percent Change
Alabama	141746	135096	121837	108269	58964	-58%
Alaska	34951	37505	37264	35432	32665	-7%
Arizona	194119	202350	195082	171617	107860	-44%
Arkansas	73982	70563	65325	59223	34901	-53%
California	2415121	2621383	2692202	2648772	2102704	-13%
Colorado	123308	118081	110742	99739	53682	-56%
Connecticut	160102	164265	170719	161736	132437	-17%
Delaware	27652	29286	26314	23153	17810	-36%
District of Columbia	65860	72330	72330	70082	53850	-18%
Florida	701842	689135	657313	575553	290977	-59%
Georgia	402228	396737	388913	367656	209613	-48%
Hawaii	54511	60975	65207	66690	75368	38%
Idaho	21116	23342	24050	23547	4460	-79%
Illinois	685508	709969	710032	663212	531623	-22%
Indiana	209882	218061	197225	147083	92551	-56%
Iowa	100943	110619	103108	91727	67189	-33%
Kansas	87525	87433	81504	70758	35659	-59%
Kentucky	227879	208710	193722	176601	129770	-43%
Louisiana	263338	252860	258180	239247	124031	-53%
Maine	67836	65006	60973	56319	41860	-38%
Maryland	221338	219863	227887	207800	125337	-43%
Massachusetts	332044	311732	286175	242572	176412	-47%
Michigan	686356	672760	612224	535704	370715	-46%
Minnesota	191526	189616	167949	171916	146257	-24%
Mississippi	174093	161724	146319	133029	61045	-65%
Missouri	259039	262073	259595	238052	158492	-39%
Montana	34848	35415	34313	32557	19913	-43%
Nebraska	48055	46034	42038	38653	38523	-20%
Nevada	34943	37908	41846	40491	27374	-22%
New Hampshire	28972	30386	28671	24519	15513	-46%
New Jersey	349902	334780	321151	293833	207678	-41%
New Mexico	94886	101676	105114	102648	69275	-27%
New York	1179522	1241639	1266350	1200847	922675	-22%
North Carolina	331633	334451	317896	282086	184382	-44%
North Dakota	18774	16785	14920	13652	8733	-53%
Ohio	720476	691099	629719	552304	372241	-48%
Oklahoma	146454	133152	127336	110498	66451	-55%
Oregon	117656	116390	107610	92182	48663	-59%
Pennsylvania	604701	615581	611215	553148	382901	-37%
Rhode Island	61116	62737	62407	60654	54425	-11%
South Carolina	151026	143883	133567	121703	71382	-53%
South Dakota	20254	19413	17652	16821	10187	-50%
Tennessee	320709	302608	281982	265320	154428	-52%
Texas	785271	796348	765460	714523	408776	-48%
Utah	53172	50657	47472	41145	29698	-44%
Vermont	28961	28095	27716	25865	20718	-28%
Virginia	194212	194959	189493	166012	104338	-46%
Washington	286258	292608	290940	276018	221274	-23%
West Virginia	119916	115376	107668	98439	45255	-62%
Wisconsin	241098	230621	214404	184209	47444	-80%
Wyoming	18271	16740	15434	13531	2974	-84%

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
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